



## PM MODI STRESSES TRUST, MARITIME SECURITY AT G7 OUTREACH SESSION

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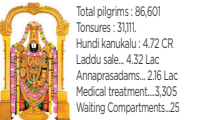


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## Air India flight safely lands in Raipur after bird strike

New Delhi, Jun 17: An Air India flight arriving from Delhi experienced a bird strike while approaching Raipur Airport on Wednesday morning, but the aircraft landed safely without causing any harm to passengers or crew members. According to officials at Raipur Airport, the aircraft was hit by a bird during its final approach and landing phase. Despite the incident, the pilots completed the landing safely and the situation remained under control throughout the operation. Following the bird strike, Air India immediately initiated standard safety procedures to examine the aircraft and assess any possible impact on its structure and systems. Airport authorities said all mandatory inspections were carried out in accordance with aviation safety regulations before allowing the aircraft to resume operations. After completing the necessary technical checks and receiving clearance from maintenance teams, the aircraft was declared fit for service and later departed for its scheduled onward destination. Bird strikes are among the most common operational challenges faced by airlines worldwide. Aviation guidelines require detailed inspections after such incidents to ensure the aircraft remains safe and fully airworthy before returning to service. Officials have not reported any significant damage in this case.

## Indian techie among 12 killed in Missouri skydiving plane crash

Missouri (TSIT): A 24-year-old Indian technology professional was among 12 people killed after a skydiving aircraft crashed shortly after take-off in the US state of Missouri, authorities said. The victim was identified as Sai Karthik Varma Datla, the only Indian national among those who died in the accident near Butler Memorial Airport in Bates County, about 80 miles south of Kansas City. The aircraft, operated by Skydive Kansas City, crashed moments after taking off on Sunday morning. According to investigators, the plane appeared to attempt a return to the airport before going down in a nearby field and bursting into flames. There were no survivors. Officials said the aircraft involved was a Pacific Aerospace P750XL commonly used for skydiving operations. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have launched a joint investigation into the crash.

## Rebuild education system to reduce cost and stress, says Rahul in Kota

KOTA (TSIT):

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday described India's education system as a "rejection system" rather than a selection system, alleging that it places excessive financial burden and stress on students and middle-class families.

Addressing a gathering in the coaching hub of Kota, Gandhi said that the current education structure is "extremely stressful and unfair". "India's education system is an extortion machine. We want a system that allows you to dream big," he said, adding that young people in the country are being subjected to too much pain, stress and unhappiness. The leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said that India's education system puts pressure on children, stresses them and crushes them. "This is not good for the country. I want all of us to work together to ensure that no student in this country ever feels what this girl felt," he said at "Chhatron ki Gooj" Maha Rally in Kota



where he interacted with students on various issues like paper leaks and unemployment.

"This is not a political meeting. This is a meeting about you, about the young people who are struggling to get a future. This evening is about you, the challenges that you are dealing with every single day," he said in his opening remarks. He claimed that the system

pushes students mainly towards a few career paths such as engineering, medical and civil services, while discouraging alternative aspirations. "Why is India only asking children to do five things? The answer is money, because the system makes money through these five routes," he alleged. Gandhi explained five paths of SSC, UPSC, RRB, JEE and NEET through a presenta-

tion. He said lakhs of students are compelled to spend large sums on schooling, coaching institutes, uniforms and hostel facilities, with no guarantee of success in competitive examinations. He cited examinations such as NEET, JEE, UPSC Civil Services Examination, SSC Exam and RRB, saying that lakhs of candidates compete for a very limited number of successful outcomes.

"For NEET alone, around 22 lakh students appear, but less than one lakh get selected. These are extremely difficult odds," he said. Gandhi said that such patterns make the system brutal and exclusionary. He further alleged that the education economy extracts large amounts of money from families each year. "Students and their families collectively spend amounts comparable to the government's entire education budget just for one examination," he claimed. He said that 22 lakh students appear in NEET and they collectively spend 1.32 lakh crore, which is equal to the budget allocation of the education ministry.

## India-UK trade pact operational from July 15



NEW DELHI (TSIT):

India and the United Kingdom on Wednesday announced that the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will enter into force on July 15, marking a new phase in the country's economic diplomacy.

Simultaneously, the Agreement on Social Security - referred to as the Double Contribution Convention (DCC) - will also come into effect on July 15, reinforcing the mobility and competitiveness of Indian professionals in the United Kingdom.

Moreover, the period of exemption under the DCC has been increased from 3 years to 5 years, thereby marking a major gain for India's temporary workers, according to a

Commerce Ministry statement.

"A historic milestone for India-UK relations. Delighted to note that the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will enter into force on 15th July 2026. This agreement will significantly boost our bilateral trade and investment," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X. "It will also unlock numerous opportunities for Indian farmers, workers, MSMEs, startups and innovators and contribute meaningfully to the realisation of Viksit Bharat 2047. Both PM Starmer and I, who are in Evian for the G7 Summit, are naturally very happy with the significant momentum being added to our economic ties," he added. The groundwork for this historic agreement was laid in May 2021 through the Enhanced Trade Partnership and the adop-

tion of the India-UK Roadmap 2030, which set the goal of elevating bilateral ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and doubling trade to \$100 billion by 2030. "The simultaneous enforcement of the CETA and the Double Contribution Convention on 15th July 2026 will open up significant new opportunities for India's exports.

By securing immediate duty-free access on 99 per cent of our tariff lines, we have systematically dismantled long-standing tariff walls," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said. This will effectively level the playing field, allowing our textiles, leather, marine, engineering, and processed food sectors to compete with no disadvantage and supply their world-class products, Goyal added.

## CM Naidu Reviews Arrangements for Yogandhra Programme



THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES, VISAKHAPATNAM: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday reviewed the arrangements being made for the statewide Yogandhra programme scheduled to be held on June 21 as part of the International Day of Yoga celebrations. The Chief Minister enquired about the measures taken and preparations underway across the state to ensure the successful conduct of the event. As part of the programme, the Chief Minister will participate in a yoga session near the Undavalli Caves on June 20 along with renowned yoga guru Baba Ramdev. A state-level Yogandhra event will also be organised on June 21 at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium in

Vijayawada. Officials informed that arrangements are being made for the participation of around 5,000 to 6,000 people in the programme. The Chief Minister directed officials to ensure all necessary facilities for participants attending Yogandhra events across the state. He emphasised the need to create greater awareness about health and wellness through yoga and called for making the programme a grand success. Mr. Naidu also suggested linking yoga activities with the State Government's Sanjeevani initiative so that the benefits of yoga could reach every household. He said Yogandhra should evolve into a mass movement promoting healthy lifestyles and public well-being across Andhra Pradesh.

## India's defence production reaches all-time high of Rs 1.78 lakh crore

NEW DELHI (TSIT)

India's annual defence production has reached an all-time high of Rs 1.78 lakh crore in the Financial Year (FY) 2025-26, marking a significant milestone in the country's push towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

As per the data released by the Ministry of Defence, the production figure represents a 15.6% growth compared to Rs 1.54 lakh crore recorded in FY 2024-



25. It has also more than doubled from FY 2020-21 levels, when defence production stood at Rs 84,643 crore, reflecting a growth

of around 110% over five years.

Compared with FY 2013-14, indigenous defence production has increased nearly fourfold from Rs 43,746 crore, highlighting the expansion of domestic manufacturing capabilities. Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and other public sector units contributed around 76% of the total defence production in FY 2025-26, while the private sector accounted for the remaining 24%.

## Jairam Ramesh accuses Amit Shah of poaching Opposition leaders, says BJP campaign will fail

NEW DELHI (TSIT)

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on union Home Minister Amit Shah, accusing him of engineering a systematic campaign to lure Opposition leaders into the Bharatiya Janata Party and alleging that the effort was aimed at compensating for what he described as Shah's "humiliation" in the Lok Sabha over the failure to secure passage of the

Delimitation Bills earlier this year. In a post on social media platform X, Ramesh claimed that the Home Minister had intensified efforts to weaken Opposition parties by encouraging elected representatives to switch sides despite having secured mandates on anti-BJP platforms just two years ago.

"The union Home Minister is continuing his onslaught on the Opposition and his wrecking of Indian democracy to compensate for his humili-



ation in the Lok Sabha on April 17, 2026 when he failed to have the Delimitation Bills passed," Ramesh said.

The Congress general secretary alleged that inducements were being

offered to Opposition legislators and political leaders to join the BJP, though he did not provide specific details or evidence to support the claim.

"His allurement are enticing a number of those who were elected just two years ago on a strong anti-BJP agenda to now join the BJP. The incentives reportedly being extended to them are mind-boggling," he said.

Escalating his criticism, Ramesh accused Shah of running what he termed a

calculated political operation designed to weaken rival parties across the country. Drawing an analogy with the mutual funds industry, he suggested that different incentives were being tailored to suit individual political circumstances.

"The Home Minister is running a wholly cynical campaign that is well lubricated and, like in the mutual funds industry, offers various schemes and products suited to individual needs," he said.

## US would help India if attacked: Trump

Evian (TSIT): US President Donald Trump on Wednesday said the United States would help India if it came under attack, offering one of his strongest public statements on defence ties with New Delhi during a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G7 summit. Trump made the remarks when asked about the defence relationship between the United States and India following talks



with PM Modi. "I think it's a great relationship," Trump said. "I can tell you

this, without having a contract. We don't have a contract. You have to write

contracts. But if they were attacked, we would be there to help them."

The comments came as Trump repeatedly praised PM Modi and highlighted the growing partnership between Washington and New Delhi. Trump then personalised the remark while referring to the Indian Prime Minister. "If anybody attacks that man, we're going to be there," he said. "Now, if there's a new leader, I'm not sure about it. If there's

a new leader, I don't know about that. But if they're attacked and he's the leader, we're going to be there to help."

The remarks drew attention because the United States and India do not have a formal mutual defence treaty, although the two countries have steadily deepened military cooperation over the past two decades. Earlier, Trump described relations with India as exceptionally strong.

## Bodies of two sailors killed in MT Settebello attack repatriated, says Indian Embassy in Oman

MUSCAT (TSIT):

The mortal remains of two Indian seafarers who lost their lives in the attack on vessel MT Settebello have been repatriated to India, the Indian Embassy in Oman said on Wednesday. In the statement shared on X, the Embassy offered condolences to the bereaved families. "The mortal remains of Mr. Aditya Sharma and Mr. Shivanand Chaurasiya, who tragically lost their lives in the attack on MT Settebello, have been repatriated to India. Our heartfelt condolences remain



with their families during this difficult time," it posted. On Tuesday, the Embassy stated that all 21 rescued Indian crew members of MT Settebello are returning to India safely from Oman. Prior to their departure back home, India's Ambassador to Oman, Prashant Pise, interacted with them.

## PM MODI STRESSES TRUST, MARITIME SECURITY AT G7 OUTREACH SESSION



Kanaskis, Jun 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday emphasised the need for trust, transparency and stronger global partnerships while addressing the G7 Outreach Session, stating that these principles are essential in an increasingly interconnected and uncertain world. Expressing concern over disruptions to maritime trade, Modi highlighted the impact of tensions in West Asia and stressed the importance of ensuring the safety of seafarers. Referring to recent incidents in the Strait of Hormuz, he noted that several Indian civilians lost their lives amid the conflict.

West Asia have suffered loss of life and property from this conflict. Due to the disruption of maritime trade in the Strait of Hormuz, the entire world economy suffered. Many civilians of India lost their lives," the Prime Minister said. Calling for secure maritime routes, Modi said the global community has a collective responsibility to protect seafarers who play a crucial role in international trade. "The safety of seafarers who connect all countries through global maritime trade is our responsibility. We must ensure that the sea lanes remain safe, and that seafarers can do their work without fear," he stated.

"We welcome progress in peace efforts in West Asia. Our friendly countries in

The Prime Minister underscored that modern challeng-

es such as energy security, food security, health security, cyber security and economic prosperity transcend national borders and require international cooperation. "A country's energy security, food security, health security, cyber security, and economic prosperity are no longer determined solely within its borders. Mobility, data, capital and technology connect us all," Modi said.

Highlighting the importance of international cooperation, he added that effective partnerships can only be built on a foundation of trust.

"In such a world, the importance of partnerships naturally increases. However, partnerships can succeed only when they are built on trust. Today, the most important strategic asset is not a mineral, technology, or market, but mutual trust," the Prime Minister said. Modi's remarks came amid concerns over maritime security in the Gulf region following recent hostilities that disrupted shipping routes and affected global trade and energy supplies.

## Justice for all Udandapur displaced farmers: Anirudh Reddy



Mahabubnagar, June 17: Jadhcharla MLA Anirudh Reddy said that the government is committed to solving the problems of the displaced farmers who lost their lands due to the construction of Udandapur reservoir and will take steps to ensure justice for every deserving farmer. Wednesday at the Collectorate meeting hall. He participated along with District Collector Khushboo Gupta and R&R Commissioner Shivakumar Naidu in a meeting held with displaced farmers of Udandapur Reservoir. On this occasion, the MLA said that there is no need to worry about farmers who have not received compensation due to court

cases and other reasons. So far 90 to 95 per cent of the displaced families have been provided with compensation and resettlement packages, while the rest of the eligible families have also been resolved. He said that they will look at it from a humanitarian perspective and resolve it quickly. As per the instructions of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, it has been clarified that every case will be examined separately and justice will be given to every deserving farmer. While the previous government did not pay them proper compensation and many farmers demanded to increase the compensation amount, we will take steps to look into the problem of every eligi-

ble farmer and release the pending compensations. MLA assured.

He said that the government is working with the aim of storing water in the coming year and a half after completing the remaining works of Udandapur Reservoir and asked the farmers to cooperate in the completion of the project. District Collector Khushboo Gupta said that all displaced families will be rehabilitated as per government norms and compensation will be given to those who are eligible. Details of each family they said that they will look into it thoroughly and take action to ensure that justice is done.

R&R Commissioner Sivakumar Naidu said that as per the instructions given in the review meeting conducted by the Chief Minister in Somashilu, all the pending cases will be examined from a humanitarian perspective and compensation will be provided as per the government guidelines.

## Talent is the key to success: Seethakka



Mulugu, June 17 (TSIT): Telangana Minister Seethakka said that youth can excel in any field if they possess talent and determination. Speaking at the Mega Job Mela-2026 held at Incherla village in Mulugu district on Wednesday, she urged young people to seize employment opportunities and build a strong future. Along with District Collector

Borkhade Hemant Sahadeva Rao, she handed over appointment letters to selected candidates. The Minister said Mulugu, which topped the state in SSC results, should also lead in employment generation. She encouraged youth to pursue both government and private sector jobs and make the best use of available opportunities.

## Coalition Government Committed to Employee Welfare

Over Rs.1.45 Crore Financial Assistance Extended to Families of Excise Personnel Who Died in the Line of Duty

The South India Times, Visakhapatnam : Reaffirming its commitment to employee welfare, the Andhra Pradesh coalition government has provided substantial financial assistance to the families of Prohibition and Excise Department personnel who lost their lives while discharging official duties. Under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and Minister Nara Lokesh, the government has been prioritizing the welfare, safety, and social security of government employees. During a programme held at the District Prohibition and Excise Officer's Office in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday, Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra handed over a special financial assistance cheque of Rs.1 crore to



the family of late Head Constable L. Simhachalam Naidu, who died in a road accident while on duty. In addition, the family received Rs.22.72 lakh under the State Bank of India insurance scheme, Rs.10 lakh as government assistance, and further support from Excise Gazetted Officers' Associations and other contributors, taking the total assistance to more than Rs.1.45

crore. The government has also extended support to the families of other employees who died while in service. The family of late C.H. Picheshwara Rao received financial assistance of Rs.1.10 crore. The family of late A. Reddeyya, a constable from the Ramasamudram Check Post in Annamayya district, was provided insurance benefits, spe-

cial financial assistance, contributions from colleagues, compassionate appointment to an eligible family member, and support for house-site allotment. Similarly, the family of late A.V.V. Satyanarayana of Peddapuram was sanctioned Rs.1 crore in assistance through government and SBI support mechanisms. The government has also taken several measures to strengthen the Excise Department, including filling vacancies, granting long-pending promotions, ensuring timely salary payments, and improving employee morale. Officials stated that these initiatives reflect the government's firm commitment to the welfare and socio-economic security of employees and their families, setting a positive example of compassionate governance.

## NDA government's two-year welfare achievements celebrated at Yadamarri Vijayotsava Sabha



Chittoor, June 17: A Grand Welfare Victory Celebration Meeting (Sankeshma Vijayotsava Sabha) was held at Yadamarri in Puthalapattu Assembly Constituency on Tuesday to mark the completion of two years of the NDA government in Andhra Pradesh. Chittoor MP Daggumalla Prasad Rao and Puthalapattu MLA Murali Mohan attended the programme as chief guests. The leaders began the event by paying floral tributes to the statue of late N. T. Rama Rao, founder of the Telugu Desam Party and former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Addressing the gathering, the MP and MLA said that

under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, the NDA government has been functioning as a people-centric administration committed to welfare and development. They stated that welfare and development remain the government's guiding principles and highlighted the implementation of the 'Super Six' welfare schemes aimed at improving the lives of people across the state. The leaders said the government has been fulfilling its promises and working towards the welfare of all sections of society. They also called upon leaders and cadre of the TDP, BJP and Janasena parties to actively take the government's welfare initiatives

and developmental achievements to the grassroots level and create greater awareness among the public. The meeting was attended by TDP Chittoor District President Shanmugam Reddy, District General Secretary Sunil Chowdary, former General Secretary Kodanda Yadav, Yadamarri Mandal President Murari Yadav, Bangarupalem Mandal President Dharani Prasad, constituency leaders Venkateswara Chowdary, Dorababu and Haribabu Naidu, Single Window Chairman Chitra Naidu, District General Secretary Dharani Prakash, along with several NDA leaders, party functionaries and workers.

## Collector Rizwan Basha orders strict action against illegal sand transportation in Rajoli



Jogulamba Gadwal: District Collector Rizwan Basha Shaik on Tuesday directed officials to take stringent measures to curb illegal sand transportation and ensure that sand is supplied to consumers strictly in accordance with government regulations. The directions were issued during an extensive inspection tour of Rajoli Mandal. As part of the visit, the Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the Thummilla Sand Reach and reviewed its operations. He stressed the need for continuous monitoring through CCTV surveillance and close coordination among the Mining, Police and Revenue Departments to prevent illegal sand mining and transportation. He also examined records maintained at the site and issued necessary instructions to officials.

## Foundation Stone Laid for Rs.142-Crore Road Over Bridge Between Namburu and Mangalagiri



Visakhapatnam (TSIT) The foundation stone for the construction of a Road Over Bridge (ROB) in place of Level Crossing No.14 between Namburu and Mangalagiri railway stations on the Guntur-Vijayawada section was laid on Wednesday. The programme was attended by Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications; Nara Lokesh, Andhra Pradesh

Minister for Information Technology, Electronics & Communications, Real Time Governance and Human Resources Development; MLC Alapati Rajendra Prasad; Guntur Divisional Railway Manager Sudeshna Sen; Chief Project Manager of Gati Shakti Unit Simon; and other dignitaries. The ROB, estimated to cost Rs.142 crore, will be fully funded by Indian Railways. The project aims to enhance safety

for both rail and road users, reduce traffic congestion caused by frequent closure of the level crossing gate, and improve connectivity in the rapidly developing Amaravati-Mangalagiri region. Once completed, the bridge is expected to ensure uninterrupted vehicular movement, strengthen road-rail connectivity, improve operational efficiency, and contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of the region.

## GITAM Hyderabad opens admissions for 2026-27, launches School of Education



Hyderabad, June 17: GITAM Deemed to be University has announced admissions for its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for the academic year 2026-27 and launched the new GITAM School of Education, marking a significant expansion of its multidisciplinary academic offerings. The Hyderabad campus has introduced several new programmes, including four-year integrated B.A. B.Ed. and B.Sc. B.Ed. courses under the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), BBA (Entrepreneurship) in collaboration with the Bower School of Entrepreneurship, B.Sc. Microbiology, M.Sc. Biotechnology, M.Tech. in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence, and M.Pharm. in Industrial Pharmacy, subject to approval from the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI). University officials said the new programmes are designed to align academic learning with emerging industry requirements and societal needs. A key feature of GITAM's academic model is its Liberal Education framework, which allows students to combine majors and minors across disciplines and create personalized learning pathways. Admissions are being offered through GAT 2026 and

various national and state-level entrance examinations, including TG and AP EAPCET, NCET, NATA, JEE, CUET, CAT and other recognized tests. Eligible meritorious students can avail scholarships of up to 100 per cent covering tuition fees, food and accommodation. The GITAM Admission Test (GAT 2026), a national-level entrance examination conducted by the university, is scheduled to be held online on June 28, 2026. The last date for submitting applications is June 26, 2026.

The Hyderabad campus offers programmes through its Schools of Technology, Science, Business, Humanities and Social Sciences, Architecture, Pharmacy, Public Policy and the newly launched School of Education. The university maintains strong industry linkages, with more than 350 recruiters offering career opportunities across various disciplines.

Prof. D. Sambasiva Rao said the launch of the School of Education and the introduction of programmes in Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Entrepreneurship and Life Sciences reflect the institution's commitment to preparing students for future careers through multidisciplinary and industry-focused education.

## VETA to host Women Empowerment Summit 2026 in Hyderabad on June 24

Hyderabad, June 17: The Women Empowerment Telugu Association (VETA) will organize the Women Empowerment Summit 2026 on June 24 at the Jubilee Hills Convention Centre in Hyderabad, with a focus on promoting women's leadership, education, employment, healthcare and social participation.

The announcement was made by VETA Founder Hanumandla Jansi Reddy during the unveiling of the summit poster at a programme held in MLA Colony, Banjara Hills. Addressing the gathering, Jansi Reddy said VETA India is expanding its activities across the country with the objective of empowering women and creating opportunities for leadership development and social advancement. She emphasized that true empowerment involves enabling women to make decisions independently, build self-confidence, assume leadership roles and access resources necessary for personal and professional growth.

The summit will be inaugurated by prominent dignitaries, including Seethakka, Konda Surekha, T. Rajani, Neeraja and Malkajgiri Commissioner Sumathi.

The event will feature expert sessions and panel discussions on women's empowerment, legal awareness, employment opportunities, leadership development, healthcare, sustainable development and career advancement. Among the distinguished speak-



ers expected to participate are Dr. K. Padmavathi, Principal of Government Degree College for Women, Begumpet; economist and researcher Dr. Pavani Itikyala; life transformation coach Rajitha Mainampally; women's rights activist Prema Pavani; career development expert Shailaja Sanghi; hepatologist and liver transplant specialist Dr. Kavya Dendukuri; and Haima Reddy Vulpala.

Organizers said the summit will serve as a platform for dialogue, collaboration and inspiration, encouraging women and young leaders to actively participate in leadership roles and contribute to the nation's sustainable development. The event is expected to attract women professionals, students, entrepreneurs, activists and community leaders from across the country.



EDITORIAL

THE MAKING OF THE AERODYNAMIC DHOTI MK-1

Chandigarh: The Indian Army's recently introduced uniform regulations, widely understood to have been undertaken at the government's behest as part of a broader push to reduce the lingering imprint of colonial-era traditions, have been welcomed across sections of the media, serving officers, defence analysts, and assorted custodians of national authenticity.

The centrepiece of this initiative is the newly issued Army Uniforms, 2026, regulations, which remove several residual colonial dress customs. The changes include the indigenous bandi jacket as formal wear - better known in recent years as the "Modi jacket" - the phasing out of ceremonial pouch belts, more commonly known as Sam Browne belts which are named after General Sir Samuel Browne of the British Indian Army, the curtailment of sword-carrying on ceremonial occasions, and the elimination of assorted vestiges of imperial terminology and practice. Collectively, these measures aim to give Indian military dress a more distinctly atmanirbhar, or indigenous, character. Yet, they also raise an intriguing question: if decolonisation is to be pursued to its logical conclusion, perhaps the time has come to confront the greatest surviving British contribution to military attire: shirts and trousers themselves.

Though neither garment originated in Britain, it was the British who popularised the tailored shirt-and-trouser combination, which by the early 19th century had become standard male attire across much of the Western world and, eventually, the globe. Few items of clothing are more closely associated with the British imprint on modern dress. After all, before the arrival of the East India Company in the early 17th century and the Raj that followed the 1857 uprising, assorted Indian campaigners did not spend much time worrying about shirt collars, trouser creases, or whether a belt was correctly aligned with its buckle. Rajput cavalrymen, Maratha horsemen, Sikh warriors and even earlier Mughal soldiers had won and lost wars across the subcontinent with remarkable success despite the complete absence of cargo pockets and regulation trouser lengths. Military history before the advent of the British was surprisingly indifferent to the question of trousers and shirts as standardised elements of uniforms, a concern that, if decolonisation is to be meaningfully undertaken, must itself be re-examined. Chhatrapati Shivaji, whom contemporary political discourse - particularly within strands of the BJP's broader civilisational imagination - often invokes with considerable emphasis, built his empire through a combination of mobility, political cunning, and battlefield audacity, without any concern for combat attire or sartorial codes. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Khalsa Army, likewise, expanded across Punjab and deep into Afghanistan through discipline, organisation, and formidable firepower, rather than any preoccupation with whether shirts were properly tucked or trousers fell at the correct angle above the boot. Countless other Rajput military campaigners too raised and commanded armies and governed vast territories without ever consulting a dress regulation manual or pausing to debate uniform etiquette of trousers and shirt as a condition of martial effectiveness.

Did Trinamool Congress Collapse For Want Of Clear Ideology?

West Bengal politics continues to shock and surprise every day following the historic electoral upset in May, when the BJP secured a massive victory of 208 seats, ending the 15-year Trinamool Congress rule. The Trinamool has since fragmented. On June 14, 20 of its 28 Lok Sabha MPs led by Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar rebelled and sought to merge with the NCPI (Nationalist Citizens Party of India) to support the NDA. Several Rajya Sabha members too have resigned from the Trinamool. Earlier, soon after the results, around 58 to 60 of the party's 80 MLAs submitted letters to the Assembly Speaker supporting expelled leader Ritabrata Banerjee. Reports suggest more than 100 Trinamool councillors left municipal bodies across the state. So, the disintegration is across all levels. The dramatic collapse of the Trinamool in West Bengal following the poll defeat has reignited a debate - was the party's collapse inevitable because it never possessed a coherent ideological foundation of its own? The answer is partly yes, but not entirely. The Trinamool's current crisis appears to be the consequence of a political model built more around cult leadership, welfare populism and anti-Left sentiment than around a durable ideological framework. Such a model can deliver electoral victories for years, but it becomes vulnerable once power is lost. There is also a lesson for other regional parties. Fragility of slogans The slogan 'Maa, Maati, Manush' was one of the most powerful political slogans in modern Indian politics. It helped the Trinamool mobilise public anger against the Left



Front over Singur, Nandigram, land acquisition and perceived political arrogance. The slogan became synonymous with grassroots empowerment and ultimately helped bring the Trinamool to power in 2011. To be fair to the Trinamool, the party did cultivate a distinctive political identity based on Bengali regional pride, welfare-oriented governance and opposition to what it portrayed as excessive centralisation from New Delhi. Alas, simultaneously, Trinamool local strongmen and goons established a parallel governance structure in West Bengal by controlling local economies through extortion rackets. They enforced a system where citizens and businesses were forced to pay unofficial 'taxes', fundamentally looting public funds and

resources. After fifteen years in power, the Trinamool faced the same challenge that every long-ruling party faces - perceptions of arrogance, factionalism and distance from ordinary citizens. The anti-establishment movement gradually became the establishment itself. Besides, the majority of Trinamool cadre were political turncoats from CPM and other parties, thus loyalty factor was missing. A slogan succeeds when people believe it represents a mission. A slogan fails when people begin to see a gap between the promise and reality. People eventually became more concerned about jobs, industrial investment and youth migration than about symbolic political battles. When young people feel compelled to seek opportunities elsewhere,

emotional appeals about regional pride become less persuasive. Core ideological pillars a party held together by ideology can survive electoral defeats because members remain committed to a larger cause. The BJP survived decades on the margins in the states and at national level before coming to power. The Left in Bengal survived several electoral setbacks because cadres remained ideologically motivated. Many regional parties in India are built around charismatic leaders. The Trinamool's experience resembles that of the BRS (Bharat Rashtra Samithi) in Telangana. The BRS dominated Telangana politics for nearly a decade. Its central narrative was statehood and regional pride. Once that mission was accomplished and governance

issues became dominant, the party's aura weakened considerably. A movement can win power. Ultimately, the government must deliver. Contrarily, the DMK offers an interesting contrast. Whether one agrees with its ideology or not, it possesses a clear ideological framework rooted in the Dravidian movement, social justice and Tamil identity. As a result, the party often survives setbacks because supporters see it as more than an election machine. This is why ideology matters. Not because ideology wins every election, but because it helps parties survive defeats. In Maharashtra, the continuing friction in the Shiv Sena UBT is a classic example of ideological shifts and controversial leadership decisions. There are sparking rumours of 'Trinamool -

style' rebellion and potential crossovers to the rival Eknath Shinde Sena. The recent mass defection of 7 out of 10 AAP (Aam Aadmi Party) Rajya Sabha MPs, who merged with the BJP, is another example of vanishing ideology. Defecting leaders openly cited toxic work environments, suppression of hard work, and a departure from the party's core founding principles as the primary reasons for their exit. The regional parties in north India like Janata Dal United and Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar and Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh have survived because of their core ideology rooted in socialism, secularism, and social justice. Over years, through various social coalitions, they have managed to develop their traditional vote banks. The events of 2026 may ultimately be remembered as a lesson for regional parties across India. Charismatic leadership can build a movement. Welfare schemes can create a voter base. Electoral victories can sustain unity. But when defeat arrives, only strong institutions and a shared ideological commitment can keep a party together. Indian voters are among the most politically aware in the world. And no party is invincible. The Trinamool's implosion suggests that for many within the organisation, power was the glue. Many of those who later rebelled had previously benefited from the Trinamool's expansive coalition-building strategy. Once the party lost power, the incentives that had united disparate factions weakened dramatically. Once that glue called 'power' dissolved, the structure collapsed like a pack of cards.

Haunted Or Hunted? Why The Ghosts Of 2015 Continue To Shadow Sukhbir Badal



Punjab's political memory becomes particularly unforgiving when questions of power intersect with faith, injury and delayed justice. More than a decade after the 2015 sacrilege incidents and the police firing at Behl Kalan, Sukhbir Singh Badal continues to face sustained political attacks. The ruling Aam Aadmi Party, along with dissident Akalis and other opponents, repeatedly return to Bargari, Kotkapura and Behl Kalan whenever Shiromani Akali Dal-Badal (SAD-B) attempts to rebuild its organisation or regain political ground. Sukhbir Singh Badal may have completed the religious punishment imposed upon him, but his party is still being made to serve a political punishment. That raises an uncomfortable question: is SAD-Badal genuinely haunted by an unresolved past, or are the ruling party and its other rivals deliberately keeping that past alive because it remains the Badal leadership's greatest political vulnerability? The

answer lies somewhere between the two. Why 2015 Has Returned to the Political Debate The Behl Kalan investigation has once again brought the events of 2015 to the centre of Punjab politics. According to reports, the SIT questioned former Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh about the proceedings held before the Akal Takht on December 2, 2024, including the answers given by Sukhbir Singh Badal. The exact nature of what was acknowledged during those proceedings, and its possible legal relevance, is now sharply disputed. Giani Raghbir Singh's reported account has been interpreted by SAD's opponents as carrying specific implications for the Behl Kalan case. Sukhbir Singh Badal and his party reject that interpretation, maintaining that he accepted broad moral and political responsibility as the head of the then government, rather than criminal responsibility for a particular act. Sukhbir Singh Badal reacted

strongly. "Neither am I afraid of cases being registered against me, nor am I afraid of going to jail," he said. He also clarified his Akal Takht submission, "As a humble Sikh, I took full responsibility for any fault committed by the SAD government and even for causing hurt, if any, to anyone." His party argues that statements made by a Sikh while submitting to a religious process should not be selectively converted into evidence of criminal liability. According to the party, doing so could compromise the autonomy and sanctity of the Akal Takht. Its opponents offer a different argument. They say that an acknowledgment made before the Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs, cannot be invoked for religious atonement and then treated as irrelevant when questions of governmental accountability arise. The distinction is crucial. A general acceptance of moral or political responsibility is not automatically an admission of involvement in a

particular criminal act. Nevertheless, the SIT development has ensured that the past is again shaping the present. From a Law and Order Failure to a Crisis of Faith The sacrilege controversy was never viewed in Punjab as an ordinary administrative failure. It entered Sikh religious memory. The police firing at Behl Kalan, in which two anti-sacrilege protesters were killed, deepened the rupture. Questions over who authorised the police response, what senior functionaries knew and why accountability remained delayed transformed the episode into a continuing crisis of confidence. Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party, dissident Akalis and other Panthic formations have all used the issue against the Badal leadership. But it would be too convenient to suggest that the controversy survives only because political opponents keep reviving it. Rivals can exploit a wound; they cannot sustain it indefinitely unless a section of society continues to believe that it has not healed. The December 2024 Proceedings Against this background, Sukhbir Singh Badal and several former Akali ministers appeared before the Akal Takht on December 2, 2024. Sukhbir did not appear only as a former deputy chief minister or party president. He appeared as a Sikh submitting to the authority of the Akal Takht. During the proceedings, he accepted responsibility for mistakes committed by the government of that period, placing them, in his words, in his own "jholi".

PUBLIC ASSETS, PRIVATE CAPITAL: INDIA'S NEXT REFORM STEP

The promise of peace in the Middle East is weaving its way past the Strait of Hormuz. Donald Trump's self-certified 'great deal' is yet to arrive, even if piece by piece. That thought hasn't detained the markets, which have brushed aside words, events and doubts. Stock indices are up, bond yields are down and most importantly crude oil prices have tumbled. Feel-good clouds are ephemeral, transient by definition. Mood is not capital. Sentiments are a sugar rush - they spike, flatline and reverse, often violently when expectations are not met. India is the fastest-growing large economy, but the fundamentals are not all rosy. Yes, the Rupee is hanging in there - thanks to the RBI's emergency measures. That said, forecasts suggest growth is lower and inflation is higher, FIIs are unloading equity, and net FDI is spluttering. It is known that markets are focused on the immediate and underestimate the long term. Energy prices will be volatile - even if supply lines are unclogged, restoration of gas and oil output to pre-war levels could take two years, as per the IEA. The global context is not entirely rosy, even though markets are buoyant. Availability of capital will be critical as the world migrates from a context of demand deficit to supply insufficiency - the shift ranges from funding AI and AI adjacent capex to reshoring of manufacturing to rebuilding energy grids. Global capital expenditure



on energy alone is expected to top \$ 3.4 trillion in 2026. Add the capex of AI giants estimated at \$ 700 billion and other sectors for the math on the need for capital. The global economy is moving into a higher inflation and higher for longer interest rates regime. Debt and deficits are higher. Central banks are signalling rate hikes - the Bank of Japan and ECB have already hiked rates. The quantum shift is reflected in Nvidia's borrowing programme. It is the world's most valued company with over \$ 80.5 billion in cash in hand. Yet it is in the market for raising \$ 25 billion in debt. The world is moving from a demand-deficient circumstance to a supply-constrained context. As demand for capital rises, so will the cost of money. India needs a plan for what Keynes called the 'economic consequences of peace'. Recent months show India's

dependence on imported energy has long-term implications. The Indian economy will need fuel and capital to fuel its economy. David Landes observes in The Wealth and Poverty of Nations 'The world has never been a level playing field'. The differentiator between a stagnant and dynamic economy is not the mere possession of resources but the ability to deploy them. The economy needs a transformative, orbital move - one large enough to convert a sentiment shift into a structural one, before the window of optimism blinks. India must corral, value and monetise, dollarise public assets. India has the resources. India has the moment. What India has consistently lacked is the institutional boldness to go big. That gap between what India's sovereign assets are worth and what they currently earn is central to

India's location in the low-middle income bracket. The saga is spelled out by NHA, AAI, CONCOR, ISRO's commercial arm, India Post, Indian Railways Freight, and NABARD, which could well be worth around \$ 300 billion. Here are a few assets worth monetising - valuations are indicative and derived - listing as ADR on NYSE. CONCOR - India's dominant intermodal logistics platform CONCOR operates 66 terminals, 54,619 containers, 17,967 wagons, with 4.5M sq ft warehouse space, connecting 13 gateway ports. The corporation moved over 5.58 million TEUs. It is listed domestically at \$ 4 billion. It merits a global listing alongside India's supply-chain narrative. As the roadshow by the company showed, there is investor appetite. The missing part is the ADR structure. NHA - The world's second-largest road network. 1,46,560 km.

# Telegram CEO claims Reliance, WhatsApp behind ban push in India

**New Delhi:** Messaging app Telegram CEO Pavel Durov has alleged that Reliance Group, in which Meta has a partial stake, may have lobbied, along with its competitor WhatsApp, to impose a ban on the company's app in India. He also accused Reliance of sabotaging access to Telegram for millions of users outside India (including the UAE). A senior telecom industry source, who did not wish to be named, termed the allegations as "fake news" as Durov has confused Reliance Communications with Reliance Industries Ltd. "Indian telecom Reliance is sabotaging access to Telegram for millions of users OUTSIDE India (including the UAE) via a rogue method called BGP hijacking. The sabotage seems intentional, as Reliance has ignored multiple reports. This may be part of a competitive war, as Reliance is partially owned by Meta, the company behind WhatsApp," Durov said in a social media post on X. Meta has a small stake in the digital arm of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) — Jio, while subsea cables are operated by another group, Reliance Communications, which is not part of RIL.



Durov said network operators are advised to reject unauthorised BGP announcements from Reliance (AS18101) to prevent route hijacks and ensure stable Internet access for their users. "Such abuse of global Internet routing is alarming. I wouldn't be surprised if Reliance/WhatsApp were also behind the recent lobbying effort to ban Telegram in India," he said. The Indian government has ordered Google and Apple to delist the Telegram app from their app stores till June 22 to check paper leaks during the

upcoming re-examination of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) on June 21. The nationwide examination conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admission to undergraduate medical institutes. The agency cancelled the previous exam held on May 3 amid allegations of paper leak. Besides, a separate direction requires Telegram to disable in India the message-editing feature for already-posted messages till June 30, addressing the specific structural feature through which the platform has been used to fabri-

cate after-the-event "paper leak" evidence in respect of national examinations. The industry source, who did not wish to be named, said Durov's own series of posts makes it clear that the company in question is RCom. "The allegations he is making regarding Meta, however, relate to an entirely different company — Jio. These are separate entities. Meta is only a minority investor in Jio and has no role in its day-to-day operations or management. Conflating the two demonstrates either a lack of understanding of the sector or a

deliberate attempt to spread misinformation," the source said. An email query sent to Telegram, RCom, Jio, Meta and WhatsApp in this regard did not elicit any immediate reply. "Such abuse of global Internet routing is alarming. I wouldn't be surprised if Reliance/WhatsApp were also behind the recent lobbying effort to ban Telegram in India," he said. The Indian government has ordered Google and Apple to delist the Telegram app from their app stores till June 22 to check paper leaks during the upcoming re-examination of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) on June 21. The nationwide examination conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admission to undergraduate medical institutes. The agency cancelled the previous exam held on May 3 amid allegations of paper leak. Besides, a separate direction requires Telegram to disable in India the message-editing feature for already-posted messages till June 30, addressing the specific structural feature through which the platform has been used to fabricate after-the-event "paper leak" evidence in respect of national examinations.

# Nykaa partners with OpenAI to bring shopping to ChatGPT

**New Delhi:** Beauty and lifestyle retailer Nykaa on Tuesday, June 16, announced a collaboration with OpenAI to introduce artificial intelligence-driven shopping experiences and make its catalogue directly accessible to users through ChatGPT. As part of the multi-year agreement, Nykaa Beauty and Nykaa Fashion have been integrated as connected apps within the ChatGPT platform. This will allow users to seek conversational recommendations for skincare, apparel and fragrances, with Nykaa serving as the destination to fulfil these queries, the company said in a statement. Beyond consumer-facing features, the partnership will see the deployment of OpenAI's technologies, including ChatGPT Enterprise and coding agent Codex, across Nykaa's internal operations. The AI tools will be embedded into various departments, including marketing, supply chain, legal and engineering, to enhance enterprise productivity and accelerate the development of new features. "AI is changing how people discover products and make decisions, particularly in categories such as beauty and fashion where individual needs, preferences and context matter



enormously. Nykaa has built deep expertise in serving Indian consumers and a strong track record of using technology to improve the shopping experience," said Nitin Bwankule, Head of Enterprise Sales - India, OpenAI. "We look forward to working with Nykaa as they deploy OpenAI's technology to create more useful experiences for its customers and teams," he added. As part of the multi-year agreement, Nykaa Beauty and Nykaa Fashion have been integrated as connected apps within the ChatGPT platform. This will allow users to seek conversational recommendations for skincare, apparel and fragrances, with Nykaa serving as the destination to fulfil

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# Brembo and Ningbo SAFE Brakes Systems sign a Joint Venture for Motorcycle ABS Production in India

**17 June, 2026** - Brembo, the global mobility innovation leader, and Ningbo SAFE Brakes Systems, market leader in China's motorcycle ABS sector, have today signed a joint venture establishing a new company, BRSF Active Safety Solutions, dedicated to the production of ABS for the Indian motorcycle market. Brembo will hold a 60% majority stake in the joint venture, which will focus on the local assembly and supply of the ABS for motorcycles for the Indian market. Operations will be carried out at a dedicated manufacturing facility in Chakan (Pune), one of India's main automotive and motorcycle industrial hubs, just next to the Brembo India plant. The project includes the deployment of highly advanced and automated assembly lines, reflecting the strong focus on quality, efficiency, and industrial excellence. The plant is expected to employ around 50 people, with a progressive ramp up aligned with production volumes and the localization of the supply chain. "The joint venture with Ningbo SAFE Brakes Systems reflects our commitment to supporting the progressive evolution



of motorcycle safety standards in India," said Andrea Paganessi, Motorcycle GBU Chief Operating Officer of Brembo. "Leveraging our long-standing experience in the Indian market and by investing in local production and industrial capabilities, we aim to accompany the market's transition toward more advanced braking solutions."

"Within this joint venture, our role is to translate this shared vision into an efficient and localized industrial operation. Together with Brembo, we are establishing a manufacturing platform focused on quality, reliability and the specific requirements of the Indian motorcycle market," said Hill Shan, Founder of Ningbo SAFE Brakes Systems. The

synergies between Brembo and Ningbo SAFE Brakes Systems create a significant opportunity to further strengthen leadership in foundation brake solutions for motorcycles under the BYBRE brand, enabling the supply of advanced braking systems to Original Equipment customers in the Indian market. The joint venture will offer to customers both dual-channel and single-channel ABS solutions, aiming to cover all needs and potential in the Indian market. In the future, more advanced technology products will also be introduced to the joint venture if needed. The industrial setup has been designed to enable the JV to respond effectively to current market requirements and to quickly react to evolving safety standards in India. Thanks to the complementary expertise of the two partners, the joint venture aims to position itself as a solution provider for motorcycle braking systems, serving as a single, reliable partner for Original Equipment customers and as a competent integrator of foundation brake components and advanced braking solutions.

# IMT HYDERABAD COMMENCES ACADEMIC YEAR WITH ABHYUDAY, THE INAUGURATION OF MOP, FOR THE CLASS OF 2026-2028

**Hyderabad, 17 June 2026** - IMT Hyderabad commenced ABHYUDAY 2026, its flagship Management Orientation Program for the incoming PGDM Class of 2026-28, marking the beginning of a transformative academic journey for the newest cohort of management professionals. The inauguration ceremony was graced by Dr Raj P Narayanam, Founder and Executive Chairman, Zaggle, as Chief Guest, and Mr Ranga Pothula, MD India Subcontinent and SVP, Global Delivery Services, Infor, as Guest of Honour, in the presence of Prof (Dr) K M Baharul Islam, Director, IMT Hyderabad. The ceremony opened with the traditional lighting of the lamp and Saraswati Vandana, symbolising the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. Welcoming the new batch, Prof (Dr) Nikhil Rastogi highlighted the exceptional diversity and competitiveness that define the incoming class. Students from 24 states of India, 186



cities, and a wide spectrum of academic disciplines reflects the richness of perspectives that modern management education seeks to nurture. He remarked that management learning extends far beyond classrooms, finding equal expression in peer interactions, collaborative experiences, and intellectual curiosity. Prof (Dr) K M Baharul Islam, in his inaugural address,

reflected on the evolving nature of leadership in an era shaped by rapid technological change and unprecedented access to information. He encouraged students to remain deeply curious, intellectually agile, and open to learning from people, experiences, and perspectives, different from their own. Emphasising that innovation must be accompanied by human insight, he

urged students to become active seekers of solutions rather than passive recipients of instruction. Addressing the gathering, Dr Sourabh Bhattacharya, Dean (Academics), spoke about the importance of purpose-driven learning and the role of perspective in shaping individual journeys. Encouraging students to approach challenges with resilience and conviction, he reiterated the values that continue to define the institute's ethos: being frank in self-reflection, fair in decision-making, and fearless in pursuing what is right. Speaking on the future of work and leadership, the guest of honour, Mr Ranga Pothula highlighted how technological disruptions, particularly Artificial Intelligence, are reshaping industries at an unprecedented pace. He underscored that adaptability is no longer a competitive advantage but a prerequisite for relevance. Encouraging students to embrace change with confidence.

# Ai-CHA Strengthens India Presence with Launch of Second Store in Visakhapatnam



**Visakhapatnam, 17th June, 2026** - Ai-CHA, the globally expanding tea and premium ice cream brand from Indonesia, announced the launch of its store in MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam on June 14, bringing its globally loved range of fruit teas, boba beverages, premium ice creams and desserts to the city. With a presence across 40 countries and more than 2,500 stores worldwide, Ai-CHA continues its international growth journey by introducing consumers in Visakhapatnam to its unique blend of innovative flavours, extensive customisation and affordable indulgence. Built around the philosophy of making premium beverages and desserts accessible to everyone, Ai-CHA has built a loyal following across global markets through its combination of innovative flavours, extensive customisation and affordable pricing. Consumers can enjoy some of the brand's fan-favourite offerings, including the Vanilla Ai-Scream, Ai-Squash

Lemonade, Ai-Milk Tea Brown Sugar Pearl and Sund-Ai Boba, which have become popular among customers worldwide. Complementing these signature products is an extensive menu featuring fruit teas, milk teas, boba beverages, ice creams, sundaes, coffees and hot drinks, offering something for everyone from Gen Z consumers to families and working professionals. Looking ahead, Ai-CHA plans to expand across India through its royalty-free FOF franchise model, with a target of opening more than 500 stores nationwide over the next three years. Speaking about the launch, Lee, Founder of Ai-CHA, said, "The response we have received since launching in India has been incredibly encouraging. It has reaffirmed our belief that Indian consumers are increasingly looking for new experiences while continuing to value quality and affordability. Visakhapatnam is an exciting next step for us, and we are delighted to bring Ai-CHA to

the city. Our goal has always been simple: to create products that people can enjoy every day, whether it's students catching up with friends, families spending time together or professionals looking for a refreshing break. We look forward to becoming a part of those everyday moments." Adding to this, Sarthak Mohindra, Country Head - India, Ai-CHA, said, "From the very beginning, we wanted Ai-CHA to grow beyond the metros and connect with consumers across India. Visakhapatnam stood out because of its young, vibrant consumer base and evolving food and beverage culture. The enthusiasm we have seen from customers gives us confidence that there is a strong appetite for what Ai-CHA offers. We are excited to introduce our globally loved beverages and desserts to the city and are committed to building a brand that consumers return to not just for the products, but for the overall experience."

# Japan raids ice cream giants over price-fixing allegations

Japan's competition watchdog has raided some of the country's biggest ice cream makers for allegedly forming a cartel to raise the price of their products. Some of the firms, including Meiji and Pocky maker Ezaki Glico, said this week that they have been subject to an "on-site inspection" by the Japan Fair Trade Commission (JFTC) over suspicions that they fixed the prices of frozen desserts. The JFTC said it is not releasing a statement regarding the investigation. The companies are suspected of inflating ice cream prices beyond increases in the cost of raw materials, even as the country faces a hot summer with record high temperatures. The six firms that were raided on Tuesday were Meiji, Morinaga Milk Industry, Lotte, Morinaga, Ezaki Glico and Akagi Nyugyo. The BBC has contacted the companies for comment. The firms improperly raised prices of popular desserts "several



times by 5-10% over the years", according to Japanese broadcaster NHK, citing anonymous sources. The brands distribute their products wholesale to supermarkets and convenience stores across Japan. Morinaga Milk, Glico and Meiji said in separate statements that they would cooperate with the authorities' investigation. "As reported by some media outlets today, our company has been subject to an on-site inspection by the Fair Trade

Commission on suspicion of violating the Antimonopoly Act in connection with the setting of sales prices for ice cream and other products," Meiji said. "We take this inspection very seriously and will cooperate fully with the Fair Trade Commission's investigation," the Hello Panda snack maker wrote. Glico said: "We will respond in good faith to the Fair Trade Commission's investigation and cooperate fully."

# TRUMP WARNS IRAN DEAL 'NOT FINAL' AHEAD OF FORMAL SIGNING ON FRIDAY

French President Emmanuel Macron will be holding a news conference shortly at the G7 summit. "Meanwhile, how does Iran view the deal with the US? Iran's leadership is trying to present its emerging memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the US not as a retreat, but as the result of resistance and victory. That is not an easy argument to make. The country has just gone through a damaging war, the economy is under severe pressure, and parts of the Islamic Republic's own support base have spent months denouncing any compromise with Washington. There are also Iranians, both inside the country and abroad, who see the crisis not as a moment for diplomacy, but as an opportunity for regime change. This is the divided political landscape in which Tehran is now trying to sell the deal. The waterway has been a key focus in the conflict. Bounded to the north by Iran and to the south by Oman and the



United Arab Emirates (UAE), the strait - only about 50km (31 miles) wide at its entrance and exit, and about 33km wide at its narrowest point - connects the Gulf with the Arabian Sea. About 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) usually passes through the strait, with oil coming not only from Iran but also from other Gulf states such as Iraq,

Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. About 3,000 ships usually sail through the strait each month, but this has dramatically decreased after Iran threatened to attack tankers and other ships. Facing criticism from Israel and hawks within his own Republican Party, US President Donald Trump pushed back on the idea his deal had made too many con-

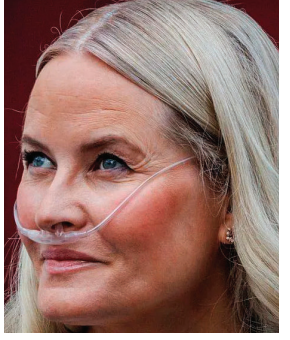
cessions to Iran. He said if Tehran didn't behave the US would go "right back to dropping bombs right smack in the middle of their head". To the surprise of some, the memorandum of understanding is reported to contain the lifting of oil and petrochemical sanctions on Iran with immediate effect, putting billions of dollars back into the country's economy. Three

Iranian oil tankers have passed through the US blockade in the Strait of Hormuz for the first time in two months. Iran has accused Israel of multiple breaches of the ceasefire in Lebanon, warning this could see the agreement collapse, while Lebanese media has reported Israeli shelling in the south of the country. The apparent text of the deal, as seen and published by Bloomberg, external, states Iran "will immediately take steps to ensure that the movement of merchant ships from the Gulf to the Sea of Oman and vice versa is resumed within 30 days to the pre-war volume". An indicator of this pre-war volume comes from shipping-tracking data published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which shows a daily average of 94 merchant ship transits across the Strait of Hormuz last year. Since the conflict began on 28 February, the daily average number of vessel transits has been just six, according to the

IMF data, though a number have been crossing with their radio transponders turned off so the true figure will likely be somewhat higher. This week US President Donald Trump has said the Strait of Hormuz will be "permanently toll-free", but Iran's foreign ministry is reported to have said there will be "fees" for using the strait which will be "charged in exchange for the services that are provided". The leaked US-Iran agreement text makes no reference to either tolls or fees. President Trump said the proposed agreement with Iran is not final. Speaking at a meeting with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on Wednesday, he said: "If I don't like it, we'll go back to shooting at them, dropping bombs on their head... if they don't behave, we'll go right back to dropping bombs right smack in the middle of their head, OK?" He also reiterated that the US is not investing in Iran.

## Norway's crown princess undergoes successful lung transplant, palace says

Norway's Crown Princess Mette-Marit has undergone a successful lung transplant in Oslo, the country's royal household has said. Mette-Marit, 52, was diagnosed with a form of pulmonary fibrosis in 2018. In recent months, her condition had worsened. "We are delighted that everything has progressed well so far," Are Holm, lung specialist at the hospital, said in the palace statement. He added that Mette-Marit would remain in hospital for "several weeks to come" under observation, which he said is standard practice for all recent transplant recipients. Prince Haakon will adjust his official schedule to support her, the palace said. The transplant comes two days after Mette-Marit's son Marius Borg Hoiby was sentenced to four years in prison after being convicted of two counts of rape. Although he pleaded guilty to some lesser offences, he denied the most serious charges



against him and his lawyers said he would appeal the sentence. Hoiby, 29, was four when his mother married Crown Prince Haakon and is not himself a royal figure. Ahead of the verdict on Monday, his legal team repeatedly and unsuccessfully sought his release from prison so he could spend time with his mother because of her declining health. The transplant "is very happy news for the Norwegian royal family and the Kingdom of Norway," said historian and royal commentator Ole-Jørgen Schulsrud-Hansen.

## Search for six-year-old Ebola patient after armed men storm DR Congo hospital



Authorities in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo are searching for a six-year-old Ebola patient and her mother after armed men stormed the hospital where they were being treated. The child was taken from Wanamahika Hospital, in the city of Butembo, by "very angry" men with knives, local health official Dr Lubambo Maboko Gaston said in a statement. It is unclear whether the men were known to the child, but suspicion and fear surrounding Ebola treatment centres have been rife during the current outbreak. In an interview with the Reuters news agency, Gaston urged the child and her mother to go to a health centre, as they risked "worsening their health" and "infecting their relatives". Ebola treatment facilities have come under attack multiple times during the ongoing outbreak, in which almost 200 deaths and 840 cases have been confirmed. Last month, police in the town of Mongbwalu fired shots in the air after angry crowds attempted to reclaim the bodies of loved ones who had died at a health facility. Days before, crowds set fire

to isolation tents in hospital in Rwampara - a town 85km (53 miles) south-east of Mongbwalu - after they were prevented from taking the body of a man thought to have died from Ebola. The body of a dead Ebola victim is highly infectious and can lead to the virus spreading further when prepared for burial. "People are not properly informed or sensitised about what is happening. For a certain segment of the population, especially in remote areas, Ebola is an invention by outsiders - it does not exist," local politician Luc Malembe Malembe told the BBC last month. "They believe it is the NGOs and hospitals creating this to make money, and this is tragic." The outbreak has been caused by a rare species of Ebola known as Bundibugyo. There is currently no vaccine for this species and the World Health Organisation has said it could take months for a job to be ready. Cases are currently concentrated in the provinces of Ituri, South Kivu and North Kivu, where the six-year-old girl was taken from the hospital on Monday.

## AUSTRALIAN SHOCK JOCK WINS A\$12M PAYOUT AFTER RADIO STATION TORE UP CONTRACT



Australian shock jock Kyle Sandilands will pocket A\$12m (\$8.5m; £6.3m) after agreeing to settle a lawsuit against his former employer who cancelled his ten-year A\$100m contract early. Sandilands was sacked from top-rating KIIS FM breakfast programme the Kyle and Jackie O Show in March, after an on-air spat with his co-host Jackie Henderson, who accused

him of bullying. He sued the station's owner ARN Media for wrongful termination and sought to recoup A\$85m. On Wednesday, the company - which had accused Sandilands of serious misconduct - said it had settled the matter and would pay him a cash settlement of A\$12.09m, as well as A\$1.5m of advertising on its platforms over three years.

## Status quo at Jerusalem's holiest site under threat as Israeli nationalists flout rules

"The whole land of Israel was promised to the children of God... and this is where we are going to build a new Temple for the entire humanity to come and pray together." Those were the potentially incendiary words of Moshe Feiglin, a right-wing nationalist Israeli politician, who spoke to me as he came down from the al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem, where he had been praying and singing religious songs with a group of around 20 other religious Jews. Feiglin spoke openly and clearly, almost as if his argument was neither controversial nor contested. But what he was saying and doing was in complete contravention of a sensitive agreement that seeks to maintain the peace at one of the most holy and emotional-



ly charged places on Earth. For Moshe Feiglin and others like him, it is simple. They want to build a huge new Jewish temple on the very site which, for the last 1,400 years, has been one of the most sacred places in Islam - al-Aqsa. The compound - also known to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary), and to Jews as the Temple Mount - is one of

the most recognisable and visually impressive sites in the Middle East. The gold-covered Dome of the Rock dominates the 35-acre site and can be seen for miles around. Al-Aqsa is mentioned in the Quran, and it is from where Muslims believe the Prophet Muhammad ascended to Heaven. It is also a site reserved exclusively for

Muslim prayer - but is that about to change? The site is also the most important place in Judaism. Below the compound, alongside its supporting Western Wall, Jews pray and mourn the destruction by the Romans of the Jewish Temple on the platform above, almost 2,000 years ago. Under what is known as the Status Quo, a decades-old understanding, custody of the al-Aqsa compound is the responsibility of a Jordanian-administered Islamic body - the Waqf (Endowment). Non-Muslims are allowed to visit al-Aqsa but they are not allowed to pray there or carry out religious rites. The Chief Rabbinate of Israel and most ultra-Orthodox rabbis also prohibit Jewish prayer on the site on halachic (Jewish legal) grounds.

## 'They came with machetes' - deadline looms for migrants to leave South Africa

South Africa has become a hostile place for undocumented migrants, as a deadline set by protesters for them to leave the country approaches. "I am very scared and traumatised," Esnat Joseph, a 36-year-old Malawian woman, told the BBC as she tried to comfort her crying one-year-old triplets. She fled her home in an informal settlement in the port city of Durban, in KwaZulu-Natal province, seeking refuge in an open field where up to 7,000 foreigners - mainly Malawians - began gathering with their belongings two weeks ago. "The people came to my house and told me: 'You must leave. We don't want you people to stay here any longer, so



you have to go to your country.' There were 10 and they were carrying weapons," she said, describing how the group of South African men were holding machetes and whips. "They cut my husband on his head and his neck. They were holding his neck like they wanted to kill him.

and March, opposition party ActionSA and others which have set 30 June as the deadline for undocumented migrants to leave. Sticks in hand, the marchers have been chanting "Mabahambe" - a Zulu phrase meaning "They must go". As the countdown continues, President Cyril Ramaphosa warned South Africans on Tuesday that the "scapegoating of vulnerable people" was not the solution to country's complex economic challenges. Joseph came to South Africa three years ago and was working as a domestic servant before having her children. Her legal status is not clear - she says she lost her passport and other paperwork in a robbery.

## Bystanders rush to rescue aircraft passengers after fiery Texas crash



Nearly a dozen bystanders and first responders rushed to the scene of a private jet crash on a Texas motorway on Tuesday to help free trapped passengers. Using what appeared to be a shovel and a sledgehammer, the passers-by and emergency officials helped several passengers escape through an opened door, video shows. The aircraft was flying from Los Cabos, Mexico, to Austin, Texas, when it reported major mechanical issues to Laredo airport, Gilberto Sanchez, the airport's director, told the New York Times. One of the six people on board died in the crash, said police. The five survivors were taken to hospital and are in a stable condition. The individual who died has yet to be identified. One vehicle was struck by the aircraft as it

crashed on to the motorway, though it is unclear what part of the plane struck the vehicle, said Jose Baeza, an investigator with Laredo Police Department. Videos of the aftermath shared on social media show thick smoke and flames surrounding the plane. Five first responders were ultimately treated for smoke inhalation, said Baeza. The crash happened near Laredo airport, 150m (240km) southwest of San Antonio. The crash has forced the major motorway, Loop 20, to shut down while the investigation proceeds. Baeza said it was expected to remain shut to traffic on Wednesday as the investigation, which will include the FBI and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), continues.



Israel launches fresh strikes on Lebanon despite Trump criticism

## EQUATORIAL GUINEA GOVERNMENT RESIGNS AFTER FAILING TO MEET TARGETS

Equatorial Guinea's government has resigned after failing to meet its objectives, Vice-President Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangué said. Obiang, who is also the son of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, said the prime minister had presented the resignation of all members of the government because it had barely reached 10% of its targets. He did not specify the targets but a statement by the ruling party said the president had observed that the government fostered corruption and failed to diversify the economy. President Obiang is the world's longest-serving leader who has ruled the oil-rich West African country since 1979 with a strong grip, while naming family members to key government



roles. The president appointed the outgoing government in 2024, with Manuel Osa Nsue Nsue as prime minister. On Tuesday, the vice-president said the resignation was in line with "the principle that responsibility in public management must be accompanied by results". "The degree of execution achieved is clearly insufficient in relation to the expectations and commitments undertaken.



TRI-NATION SERIES:

## INDIA A BEAT AFG A BY MASSIVE MARGIN, QUALIFY FOR FINAL

India A defeated Afghanistan A by 101 runs in Dambulla on Wednesday, thereby sealing their place in the final of the Tri-Nation A series. Put into bat, India A posted a strong total of 319/9 in 50 overs, led by fifties from captain Tilak Varma (59), Priyansh Arya (58) and Kumar Kushagra (58). In response, India A bowled out Afghanistan A for 218 in 36.5 overs. Nishant Sindhu led the wickets column with four wickets, Yash Thakur picked up two, while Anshul Kamboj, Anukul Roy, Vipraj Nigam and Suryansh Shedge scalped one each. 15-year-old sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi did not make a big score with the bat, but took an excellent catch. Priyansh Arya and substitute fielder Ashok Sharma also took superb catches. The win sees India A leapfrog Sri Lanka A on net-run-rate (NRR), and thereby book their place in the final. Sri Lanka A hold a significant edge over



Afghanistan A in the league standings, and unless they lose by a humongous margin, the hosts will be the ones who qualify for the final. This tournament has witnessed two very close games between India A and SL A, and should they face off in the final, it would make for a spicy contest. India A suffered defeat via DLS method in the first league stage game against Afghanistan A, but today they've avenged that loss. A big win too, helping Tilak Varma's side book their place in the final of the Tri-Nation A series. India A entered this match needing to win to keep

their final hopes alive, and they've not only won but done so in style. The batters put on a good total, but it was the bowling unit that stepped up and made the game one-sided. Once the partnership between Bahir Shah and Faisal Shinozada was broken, the Afghanistan wickets fell pret-

ty quickly. Some exceptional fielding too. The 101-run win sees India A leapfrog Sri Lanka A on net-run-rate (NRR) in the league standings, and thereby book a spot in the Tri-Nation A series final. With SL A now behind India A, even a big win by Afghanistan A in their final match would not impact Tilak Varma and co. Here's how the points table stacks up: Ibrahim Zadran and Sediqullah Atal eye recovery for one-down Afghanistan in the chase of 403 runs against India in the second ODI at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow. Earlier, Shubman Gill made a sublime 154 off 110 balls as India amassed 402 all out. Shashan Kishan (125 off 79 balls) also struck a fine hundred and shared a 224-run stand off 140 balls with Gill, who batted at number three instead of his usual opening position to accommodate Yashasvi Jaiswal at the top.

## Women's T20 World Cup 2026: India Put Into Bat By Netherlands, All Eyes On Smriti Mandhana And Co

Women's T20 World Cup: Netherlands captain Babette de Leede has won the toss and opted to bowl against Harmanpreet Kaur-led India in their second Group A game of the Women's T20 World Cup 2026, at Headingley on Wednesday. India are eyeing a second straight win, after outclassing arch-rivals Pakistan by 64 runs in their opening group game. India will be banking on star opener Smriti Mandhana and all-rounder Deepti Sharma to come good again. Netherlands are aiming to bounce back after losing narrowly to Bangladesh in their first match. The skipper of India Women - Harmanpreet Kaur says that it is a great opportunity for them to bat first. Adds that it is a bit hard under overcast conditions but they want to test themselves and put up a good total. Kaur mentions that they want to improve in the Powerplay with both



bat and ball. Says that they will try to bat with more intent and see if they can pick up a few wickets with the ball. The captain of Netherlands Women - Babette de Leede says that they will bowl first and hopefully they'll get something out of the wicket. Adds that they are super excited for this opportunity and a little bit nervous as well. The Dutch skipper mentions that it's good to have someone like Sterre

Kalis play domestic cricket here and it is actually her home venue and ends by saying that they have made one change to their side. India Women (Playing XI) - Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Yastika Bhatia (In place of Bharti Fulmali), Jemimah Rodrigues, Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Richa Ghosh (WK), Deepti Sharma, Shreyanka Patil, Sree Charani, Kranti Gaud, Nandni Sharma (In place of Arundhati Reddy).

## Ahead Of Wimbledon Return, Serena Williams Loses Doubles Match With Muchova At Berlin Open



Serena Williams' comeback hit a bump Tuesday with a loss in her opening-round doubles match at the Berlin Open. Giuliana Olmos and Erin Routliffe defeated Williams and her partner Karolina Muchova 6-4, 6-4 to end Williams' involvement in the WTA 500 grass-court tournament at the first stage. It didn't dim the love Williams was shown from the appreciative fans on what was her second appearance after a win at Queen's Club last week in London. That had been Williams' first professional match since the 2022 U.S. Open. But her participation at Queen's Club was cut short when partner Victoria Mboko injured her knee in a singles match. The 44-year-old Williams was welcomed by a huge roar and applause to center court at the Steffi Graf Stadion, which quickly filled up as fans snacking and drinking outside realized the main attraction was about

to start. Earlier Tuesday, Wimbledon organizers announced that Williams and her older sister Venus, who turns 46 on Wednesday, were being given a doubles wild card invitation for the tournament that starts in less than two weeks. Williams won 23 Grand Slam singles titles — including seven at Wimbledon — before stepping away from the game, saying at the time she was "evolving" away from tennis rather than "retiring." She has also won 14 Grand Slam doubles titles, including six at Wimbledon — all with her sister Venus. "Welcome back Serena!" one fan in Berlin shouted as Williams showed flashes of her tenacity with some ferocious returns. "Serena, we love you in Berlin!" another fan shouted to cheers in the second set. But Olmos and Routliffe broke Muchova's serve for 3-2 in the second set, and Routliffe set up the match point with an ace.

## Father Shot Dead By Al-Qaeda, Son Aymen Hussein Lights Up FIFA World Cup 2026 With Historic Goal For Iraq vs Norway

Iraq striker Aymen Hussein had to face a delay on the way to his first FIFA World Cup. Earlier this month, it wasn't clear whether Hussein would be able to compete in the tournament after he and another member of the team's traveling party were detained for several hours coming through U.S. customs in Chicago. His journey to the top level of world football, however, took a much longer time. Hussein, 30, grew up in the shadow of war. Born in 1996 in Al-Safra, in the Al-Hawija district in north-central Iraq, Hussein grew up in a humble family. According to Khaleej Times, in 2008, Hussein was 12 when his father, an Iraqi army soldier, was shot dead by Al-Qaeda. The bullet struck his heart. "He went to buy some materi-

als for our new, under-construction house. A few hours later, we received a call saying, 'Your father has been killed and his body is in the hospital,'" he said. "We didn't believe it at first. But then we went to the hospital to find my father's dead body lying there. It was a disaster for all of us." A few years later, reports Al Jazeera, his brother was kidnapped and is still missing. "I decided to quit playing football to take care of my family, but my mother refused," Hussein said in an interview. "She asked me to continue playing." He kept his dream alive and went on to make his professional debut in 2013 with Dohuk. On Wednesday (IST), Hussein scored the second World Cup goal in his country's history during Iraq's 4-1 loss to Norway.



## HOW SWELTERING SCOTLAND CAN HANDLE WORLD CUP HEAT

Hydration breaks, ice jackets, cooling towels and isotonic drinks have been a feature of the World Cup so far as hot weather impacts matches. Some games may have been played in air-conditioned stadiums and at more modest temperatures across North America, but for Scotland it is about to heat up. The opening win over Haiti in Boston was played at around 25C and, although Steve Clarke's side return to the same venue to face Morocco, the kick-off being three hours earlier means warmer conditions are likely. It is forecast to be around 27C come kick-off on Friday (23:00 BST), and Scotland's final group game in Miami against Brazil next Wednesday is predicted to be even hotter. Temperatures could be over 30C for that one, and with nearly 80% humidity expected it will feel much more than that. Scotland have prepared for this, but it could still have an impact. Even if Steve Clarke is comfortable with joggies on at training. How have Scotland prepared? Scotland flew out early to Fort Lauderdale at the start of June so they could get used to the hot weather as soon as possible. There was sun cream, tan-



lines and ice buckets as the players were put through their paces before their final warm-up win over Bolivia in New York. Their training base is in Charlotte, North Carolina - which is roughly between Boston and Miami - and temperatures there have hit 30C. Before they had even set foot in the US, some of the squad went to the University of the West of Scotland to use their extreme environments chamber, which was able to mimic the Florida conditions.

## "I Never Stop Training": Rifle Shooter Aishwary Tomar On His Approach

The first thing that stands out about rifle shooter Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar is his unwavering self-belief. A strong contender for a medal at the Asian Games in Japan later this year, Tomar remains unfazed by lean phases, and backed by his confidence he knows exactly how to rediscover his rhythm and return to the top. One of India's most consistent rifle shooters, the two-time Olympian remains grounded despite the high expectations surrounding him in the lead-up to the continental showpiece in Aichi-Nagoya from September 19 to October 4. His approach is simple - to keep his focus on his own preparation and process rather than the stature of the event or strength of the opposition. "I always try to focus on myself. I never stop training and putting in the effort. I also know



how to bounce back after a lean phase. That feeling and confidence help a lot because I am always prepared to improve in the next competition," Tomar told PTI in an interaction. "I ensure that my focus remains on

my preparation rather than on how big the event is. My priority is to execute my technique perfectly in every match. If I am able to follow these things, I believe I can definitely win a medal for India," added the young 50m rifle three-positions shooter, who is the reigning Asian champion and a silver medallist at last year's World Championships. Tomar says the lessons learnt from the two Olympics - Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 - along with his experiences at multiple World Championships and other events.

## UFC Fight Night To Return To The White House? Dana White Sets Record Straight



By the time Justin Gaethje pummeled his bloodied foe to a pulp and celebrated a championship win with a backflip off the top of the wire-mesh cage, then shook hands with President Donald Trump — and even fist-bumped Melania — this much about his company's future was clear to the ultimate boss of UFC. Just say no to the White House. "It was an amazing, experience, this was a one-of-one," UFC CEO Dana White said. "It will never happen again." Oh, not because the show dubbed Freedom 250 and ostensibly held to celebrate Trump's 80th birthday and the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence's signing wasn't by White's accounts a smashing success. He crowded about merchandise sales and streaming service subscriptions and how UFC surpassed its goals in every

metric he could list at a press conference that stretched well into dawn's early light. **And the setting?** Forget it, almost impossible to top on a night where fighters essentially treated their walk-outs like they were kids on a class trip. The all-male lineup toured the West Wing, the Oval Office, past presidential portraits, through the Roosevelt Room, the Cabinet Room — and the winners even got a meet-and-greet with Trump. Gaethje skimmed the copy of the Declaration of Independence that hangs in the Oval Office and said a prayer before he made the unusually long walk to the cage. Gaethje battered Spanish-Georgian fighter Ilia Topuria in the main event and won the UFC lightweight title.

## Lionel Messi Admits He Cried After Argentina's Opener Against Algeri

The GOAT, Lionel Messi, was seen in tears after scoring the first of his three goals against Algeria in Argentina's FIFA World Cup 2026 Group J opener on Monday night. Messi went on to net his first-ever hat-trick in the tournament's history, simultaneously equalling Miroslav Klose's record for the most goals scored in FIFA World Cup history. While fans were thrilled to see the Argentina captain at his absolute best, his emotional reaction after the opening goal left many

baffled. Speaking after the match, Messi was asked about the reason behind his tears. The 38-year-old revealed that he had endured a challenging period leading up to Argentina's opener, explaining that his emotional outpouring had nothing to do with football. "It had nothing to do with football, I went through some difficult days," Messi

said after the game. "It was a matter totally unrelated to sports; I went through some difficult, complicated days." While Messi refused to share specific details regarding the ordeal, he expressed his gratitude to his teammates and the Argentine delegation for supporting him

throughout the difficult period. "I'm grateful to the entire delegation, to my teammates. They made a lot of effort to make sure I am doing well," he added. Messi also reflected on his performance, describing his current phase of his career as the "cherry on top", considering everything he has achieved and experienced over the years. "It makes me very happy to have lived through everything that came my way. What I'm experiencing now is the cherry on top," Messi said.

"I'm very happy and grateful for this wonderful group. I am enjoying it so much." Even Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni was left at a loss for words as La Albiceleste began the defence of their World Cup crown with a dominant 3-0 victory over Les Fennecs. "I am at a loss for words about Leo. What can I say?" Scaloni said. "He's incredible."



### Vishnu Manchu's Divine Blockbuster 'Kannappa' Set for Re-release In Theatres On June 27th

The makers of Dynamic Star Vishnu Manchu's Kannappa have sparked fresh excitement by unveiling a captivating new poster to announce the film's grand theatrical re-release on June 27th. The poster showcases Vishnu Manchu in a powerful and emotionally charged moment, embracing a Shiva Lingam against a breathtaking backdrop of lush green landscapes and majestic mountains, beautifully reflecting the film's spiritual depth and devotional core.

Produced by Dr. M. Mohan Babu under the banners of 24 Frames Factory and AVAA Entertainment and directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh, Kannappa stood out as one of the most ambitious mythological spectacles in recent times. Mounted on a grand scale, the film impressed audiences with its rich visuals, strong emotional narrative, and an ensemble cast featuring Prabhas, Mohanlal, Akshay Kumar, Mohan Babu, Sarath Kumar, Brahmanandam, and several other notable actors.

The film enjoyed a sensational theatrical run, emerging as a major blockbuster, while its digital premiere further expanded its reach and won widespread appreciation from viewers across different regions. With the re-release, the makers are set to bring the



epic tale back to the big screen, giving audiences another chance to experience its blend of devotion, emotion, action, and mythology in a theatrical setting. Given the film's enduring popularity and strong fan following, Kannappa is expected to generate significant interest once again and make a strong impact during its return to cinemas.

## SPIDER-MAN: Brand New Day Opens Advance Bookings in India, Giving Fans First Access to Premium Large Format Screens

Bookings for Spider-Man: Brand New Day have officially opened! The Tom Holland starrer will release in India on 30th July, in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. The wait is finally over! Bookings for Spider-Man: Brand New Day are now officially open across India. Sony Pictures Entertainment India will release the much-awaited Tom Holland starrer in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam on July 30. The year's most anticipated blockbuster release, Spider-Man: Brand New Day promises an unforgettable big-screen adventure. To make the experience bigger, bolder, and more immersive than ever, Sony Pictures Entertainment India is bringing the film to audiences across multiple premium large formats, allowing fans to experience every swing, stunt, and spectacle on a grander scale.

Sony Pictures Entertainment India has announced that bookings for Spider-Man: Brand New Day is open across premium large formats, including PjXL, Big Pix, Screen X, ICE, 4DX and, MX4D giving fans the opportunity to experience the film on the biggest and most immersive screens available.

Confirming the release, Shony Panjikaran, General Manager and Head of Sony Pictures Releasing International (SPRI) for India, said that the premium large format roll out is to make Spider-Man's return to the big screen into a grand event. "Spider-Man holds a special place in the hearts of Indian audiences, and every new chapter becomes a shared celebration for fans across generations. With Spider-Man: Brand New Day, we wanted to match that excitement by delivering the most immer-

sive theatrical experience possible, while giving audiences the opportunity to secure their tickets early and experience the action, emotion, and spectacle of the film across premium large format screens," he said. "The excitement surrounding Spider-Man: Brand New Day reflects how audiences today choose to experience blockbuster cinema. The biggest films have become shared cultural moments that bring people together, making the theatrical experience more relevant than ever. Spider-Man is one of the world's most loved franchises, and every new chapter is eagerly awaited by fans across generations. We are delighted to partner with Sony Pictures Entertainment India for this much-awaited release and look forward to welcoming audiences to PVR INOX cinemas to experience the film in the environment it was created for, on the big screen, with fellow fans, where every moment feels bigger, more immersive, and truly unforgettable." shares Mr. Gautam Dutta, CEO - Revenue and Operations, PVR INOX Limited. Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, Spider-Man: Brand New Day stars Tom Holland as Peter Parker/Spider-Man, alongside Zendaya, Jacob Batalon, Jon Bernthal, and Sadie Sink. Sony Pictures Entertainment India will release Spider-Man: Brand New Day in theatres on 30th July 2026 in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam across all premium large formats in 2D and 3D.

About Spider-Man: Brand New Day: It's a BRAND NEW DAY for Peter

Parker. Fighting crime full-time as Spider-Man in a world that doesn't remember him—and the pressure of seeing his old friends move on without him—sparks a change in Peter he may not have the power to control. But that transformation might also be the only thing that can stop a shocking new threat to the city and those he loves - a powerful villain no one can even see.

tribution; operation of studio facilities; and development of new entertainment products, services and technologies. Sony Pictures Television operates dozens of wholly-owned or joint-venture production companies around the world. SPE's Motion Picture Group production organizations include Columbia Pictures, Screen Gems, TriStar Pictures, 3000 Pictures, Sony Pictures Animation, Stage 6 Films, AFFIRM Films, Sony Pictures International Productions, and Sony Pictures Classics. For additional information, visit <http://www.sonypictures.com/corp/divisions.html>.



Bookings for Spider-Man: Brand New Day have officially opened!

The world may have forgotten Peter Parker, but he hasn't forgotten them. About Sony Pictures Entertainment: Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) is a subsidiary of Tokyo-based Sony Group Corporation.

SPE's global operations encompass motion picture production, acquisition, and distribution; television production, acquisition, and distribution; television networks; digital content creation and dis-



### 'Transfer Trimurthulu' Is a Family Entertainer with Thrilling Elements: Hero and Producer Vadde Naveen

Under the presentation of Vadde Jishnu and the banner of Vadde Creations, actor-producer Vadde Naveen has made the film Transfer Trimurthulu. Kamal Teja Narla is making his directorial debut with this movie. The film stars Vadde Naveen, Rashi Singh, Shilpa Tulaskar, Vivek Raghuvanshi, Raghunath Babu, Shivannarayana, Vadlamani Srinivas, Jwala Koti, Devi Prasad, Surya, Baba Bhaskar, Pramodini, Sathvik Raju, Anjali Priya, Gayatri Chaganti, and others in key roles. The film is slated for release on June 19. Ahead of the release, Vadde Naveen interacted with the media on Wednesday and shared his thoughts about the film.



I had immense faith in this story. I wasn't sure whether another producer would share the same confidence. It's not that someone else would have changed the story, but I truly believed in it. That is why I decided to produce it myself.

**Will Transfer Trimurthulu have entertainment elements as well?**  
There is a lot of entertainment in the character of Trimurthulu itself. I appear as a constable, and the character suits that role perfectly. The film is not a regular commercial entertainer as audiences might expect. I play a constable who fights against problems while working within the system. We worked on the script for nearly a year.

**How realistic is Transfer Trimurthulu?**  
The film is largely realistic. It is not a full-fledged investigative thriller. We included fights and songs only where they were necessary to the story.

**What made you choose the story of Transfer Trimurthulu?**  
The core idea and story of Transfer Trimurthulu are very different and unique. I liked the story immensely. It has thrilling elements while still being a film that the entire family can watch together. My character in the movie also feels very fresh and different.

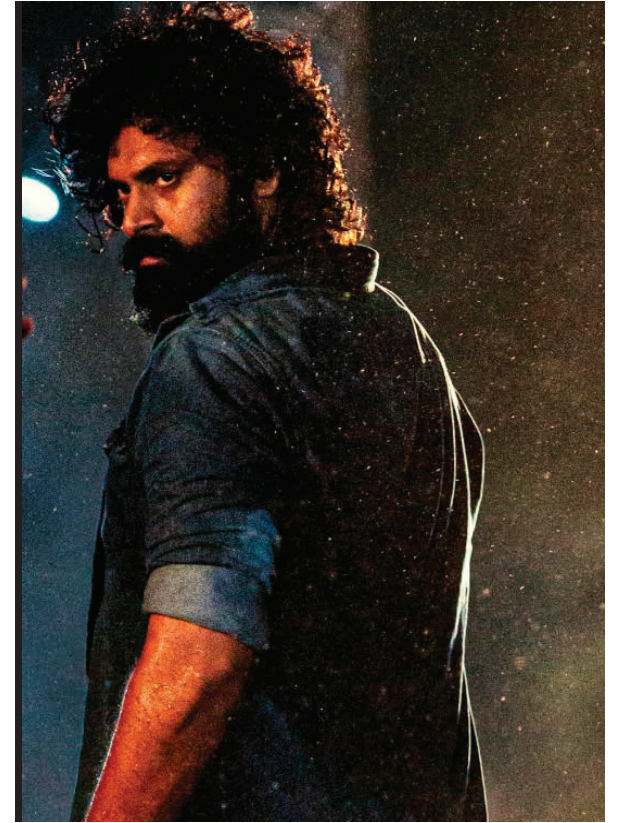
**Isn't Transfer Trimurthulu outside your comfort zone?**

**Why did you decide to become the producer for your comeback film?**

### SREE TEJ, RATNAKARAM ANIL RAJU, SRIDHAR GANGAPATNAM, SVK CINEMAS 'RAMBO' POWERFUL GLIMPSE RELEASE

'Rambo' is an action entertainer starring young talented Sree Tej in the title role. The film is being directed by Ratnakaram Anil Raju and produced by producer Sridhar Gangapatnam, who has given super hit films like Hidimba, under the banner of SVK Cinemas. The latest glimpse of 'Rambo' released by the film team has raised expectations of the film among the audience. The glimpse, which started with the powerful dialogue "A beast born as a human being is Rambo", impressed with the wild action. Sreetej completely immersed himself in the role with his intense and aggressive body language. The wild energy and screen presence he displayed, especially in the

action scenes, made the role even stronger. The way director Ratnakaram Anil Raju designed the character of Rambo was a special attraction. The wild emotions in the hero character doubled the interest in the film. The visuals provided by star cinematographer Shyam K. Naidu gave Glimps a perfect look. The intensity of the story was seen stronger with each frame. While the background score provided by Sunil Kashyap took the action blocks to another level, Kotagiri Venkateswara Rao's editing made Glimps even sharper and more gripping. Overall, the 'Rambo' glimpses have increased the audience's curiosity about the film, promising a raw, wild, and powerful action experience.



### "DEEWANA WILL CAPTIVATE AUDIENCES OF ALL SECTIONS WITH ITS FRESH LOVE STORY" – DIRECTOR SREEKANTH SANGISHETTY

After the success of Subham, young and talented actor Harshith Reddy is returning with his new film Deewana. The film is being produced by Vasudev Koppineni and Sridevi Karyampudi under the Arha Media and V Studios banners. With this beautiful love story, actress Smeha Manimegalai and director Sreekanth Sangishetty are making their debut. Deewana is set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on June 19 through Geetha Film Distributors. Speaking at a media interaction today, director Sreekanth Sangishetty shared several highlights about the film and his journey. Talking About His Journey



**into Filmmaking:**  
- About ten years ago, I worked as an assistant on the experimental film Minugurulu, which won a Nandi Award. The script was even archived in the Oscar Library. Later, I spent more than a decade working for a corporate company. During that period, I made small demo films, songs, and short films.

- I learned filmmaking mainly by watching movies and interviews. I never formally studied shot division, color palettes, or filmmaking techniques. I simply enjoyed watching films. If I disliked a movie, I would criticize it strongly. Whenever I saw poor writing getting opportunities, I wondered why I wasn't getting one. That frustration stayed with me.  
- I always believed my stories were special and wanted to see them on the big screen. I dreamed of people asking, "Who made this film?" after watching my work. Even while sitting at my office job for ten hours a day, my mind was occupied with cinema. I never cared about promotions because I didn't enjoy the job.

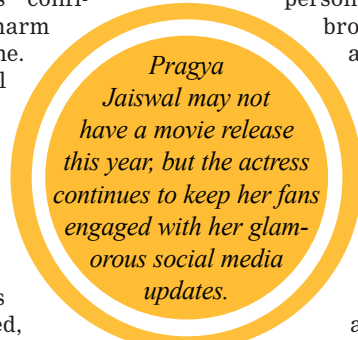


### Pragma Jaiswal Raises Temperatures IN UNBUTTONED SHORTS

Pragma Jaiswal may not have a movie release this year, but the actress continues to keep her fans engaged with her glamorous social media updates. Known for her stunning fashion choices, Pragma once again grabbed attention with a fresh photoshoot that quickly went viral online. In the latest pictures, the actress is seen sporting a stylish lace bralette paired with a light blue oversized shirt. However, it is her white denim shorts that have become the talking point among fans. The casually

unbuttoned look adds a bold edge to the outfit while maintaining a trendy and effortless vibe. Posing by a sunlit window, Pragma exudes confidence and charm with every frame. Her natural makeup, soft hairstyle, and relaxed styling perfectly complement the look. While film announcements may be awaited, the actress is proving that she doesn't need the big screen to stay in the spotlight. Pragma Jaiswal just served us the perfect summer look and we are absolutely here for it!

The stunning actress stepped out in a chic green checkered mini dress that hugged her figure effortlessly, fresh, fun, and full of personality. Paired with brown strappy heels and minimal accessories, she kept it simple yet made a massive impact. **That smile?** Pure sunshine. Whether she's on screen or off it, Pragma Jaiswal has a way of making everything look absolutely effortless, and this look is proof that sometimes, all you need is the right colour, the right fit, and that million-dollar smile!



Pragma Jaiswal may not have a movie release this year, but the actress continues to keep her fans engaged with her glamorous social media updates.